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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0554
INFO RHMFIUU/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0055

UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 000116

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [CMGT](#) [AMGT](#) [MARR](#) [DR](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: SDO Sit Rep 7 - Haiti Earthquake response

REF: A) SDO 96; B) SDO 21

11. Embassy Santo Domingo Sitrep 7, further to reftel A:

12. (U) Ref B reports on Haiti relief and reconstruction conference held in Santo Domingo on 18 January. Also, on 19 January, WHA Assistant Secretary Arturo Valenzuela gave print and TV interviews, then met with SOUTHCOM Commander General Douglas Fraser at San Isidro Air Base.

13. (SBU) Border Issues:

a) Per Am Official, border at Jimani remained disorganized but functional as in recent days.

b) The flow of persons across the border is constant, but no mass influx. However, official figures under-report the numbers of people crossing, as the data reflect only those being processed correctly. Some Haitians are sneaking across the border, per USG official. Haitian media also report "tens of thousands" leaving Port-au-Prince, some for the DR border. However, police officials say they have not seen increased illegal entry attempts in the mountains around the Jimani crossing.

c) A Haitian immigration official said that as of 1pm on 1/19 he had issued approximately 600 laissez-passes to travelers without documents. Dominican authorities at the other side of the border crossing are generally turning away travelers without a valid visa or official travel document. Medical emergency cases continue being allowed in.

d) The border crossing at Jimani was closed for 45 minutes after the Haitian colonel in charge of customs on the Haitian side began demanding "manifests" from vehicles trying to bring assistance across. GODR officials managed to talk the colonel into backing down, but plan to seek his removal. (Note: It is unclear whether this was an attempt at rent-seeking by the Haitian official, but some reporting implied that. End Note).

e) As the next Market Day in Jimani will be Thursday, efforts are already underway to see if market activities that day can be organized so as not to block/hamper through-put of assistance / evacuation vehicles.

14. (SBU) Evacuees / Consular Issues:

a) Carriers report that 90% of evacuee passengers are LPRs and NIV holders at this point.

b) No evacuation flights arrived Jan. 19 at San Isidro airbase, and the 3 flights expected overnight were diverted to Miami. We continued to maintain a skeleton staff of one FSO and one FSN at the base to allow for a quick mobilization if needed. Also SDO maintaining contact with SDO hotels, in case there is further need for rooms.

c) SDO is in the final stages of coordinating a trial run of a charter bus route to evacuate Americans from PAP to Santo Domingo and the onward to the United States. The plan is for the first two buses to leave overnight tonight at 3am, arriving first thing in the morning in Port au Prince (around 8am local time) to pick up Amcits from the embassy and return to SDO by the evening. Each bus will carry one FSO and one FSN (or EFM volunteer) to help orient the passengers and assist them with travel documentation, promissory notes and other needs. The bus will also carry water and snacks for the evacuees and, if PaP requests, will deliver emergency supplies to PAP.

d) Four American citizens currently hospitalized, including one minor child; none were discharged today. Three Americans are at Hospiten and 1 (a UN employee who was not part of San Ysidro evacuation) is at Cedimat.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED
Lambert